

PRACTICE ANALYSIS

A practice analysis is a fundamental component in creating a certification examination. Another phrase for a practice analysis is *job analysis*. The rule of law states that if an individual must successfully pass a certification examination because it is required for employment, then that examination must be based upon the actual knowledge, skills and responsibilities required of the individual in the work place. The practice analysis identifies the knowledge, skills and responsibilities expected and required for an individual to competently perform in the role in most locations. The practice analysis also may be used for the establishment of job descriptions, educational standards and in the development clinical education requirements.

Following identification of the tasks and responsibilities through the practice analysis, a critique of each task and responsibility is done to determine the specific cognitive knowledge and skills required to perform competently and with an underlying degree of intelligence. These specific areas become the content that the test is based upon and are known as *content specifications*.

Utilizing the input from radiologists from various types of radiology practices, graduate Radiology Practitioner Assistants (RPA), student RPAs, members of the Examination Committee and suggestions from Credentialing Committees within health care facilities, the clinical competency listings were revised to better reflect the RPA practice tasks and responsibilities. The major required competency areas were changed to (1) Plain Film Evaluation, (2) Fluoroscopic /Contrast Procedures, (3) Non-Vascular Imaging, (4) Vascular Procedures, (5) Evaluation of Images from Other Modalities, (6) Patient Management, (7) Patient Services, and (8) Patient Care. Activities that are not conducted by a majority of the radiology practice groups are listed as electives in the competency listing. The listings are reviewed on an annual basis to determine trends and changes in practice protocol.

Although all of the above categories were included in the previous listing of clinical tasks and responsibilities, the new listing clarifies more specifically the tasks and imaging procedures that are the primary responsibilities of the RPA. Based upon the identification of more definitive tasks and responsibilities, the content specifications were revised to reflect the modified task inventory and were expanded to ten major domains. Only topics that are linked to more than one task or responsibility are listed in the content specifications.